

## Hong Kong Editor Jailed by Peking as a Spy for U.S.

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PEKING—Lo Fu, founder and editor of the New Evening Post, a Communist newspaper published in Hong Kong, has been imprisoned here for 10 years as an American spy, Chinese authorities announced Sunday.

Lo pleaded guilty to charges of providing an unnamed U.S. intelligence agency with "important secret information about China's political, diplomatic and military affairs," the official New China News Agency reported. It said that Lo had been working as an American spy for several years and was regularly paid by the United States. It did not disclose the exact nature

of the information he was accused of passing.

The case reflects the deteriorating state of Sino-American relations. Lo was convicted under the section of the Chinese criminal code forbidding disclosure of secret information to "the enemy," a characterization that China stopped applying to the United States almost a decade ago.

The emphasis on Lo's spying for the United States is certain to raise questions here about Sino-American relations and, presumably, is intended to do so.

There was no immediate comment from either the U.S. Embassy here or the American Consulate General in Hong Kong. But officials in Washington, quoted by the Reuters news agency, said it was the first time that Peking has charged the United States with any such activities since diplomatic relations were established in 1979.

Lo, 62, who is also known as Lo Cheng-hsun, was arrested a year ago after being summoned to Peking and was put on trial last summer. He was sentenced April 29 to 10 years in prison and three years' deprivation of political rights upon his release, the news agency said, adding that he did not appeal.

One of Hong Kong's most prominent leftist intellectuals, Lo had developed wide contacts in the British colony during the last 30 years and was cultivated by diplomats and journalists there as a source of information about China.

As the New Evening Post's editor and as assistant editor in chief of Ta Kung Pao, another Hong Kong Communist newspaper, Lo was well-informed through party channels of Chinese developments, and one of his functions appeared to be interpreting and explaining those developments to Hong Kong Chinese and the foreign "China watchers" there.

His colleagues on the two newspapers were told that Lo had gone far beyond these responsibilities and was selling highly classified information to intelligence agents based at the U.S. Consulate General. Party officials suggested that he did it for money, buying a house for two sons working in Britain and paying tuition for a son and a daughter studying there.

But Lo's friends said they believed that he was more the victim of factional fighting among Communist Party officials in Hong Kong than an American spy. Lo might have gone too far in providing background information about China to U.S. diplomats, they theorized, and this error in judgment might have been turned into a crime by his rivals.

Lo's acceptance of an invitation by the U.S. Information Agency to visit the United States in May and June last year, a journey paid for by the agency as part of a cultural exchange program, may have furnished these rivals with an excuse to call for an investigation of Lo, his friends believe.

"That is when all of Lo Fu's problems began," a friend said.

However, Lo's influence at Ta Kung Pao, the principal Communist newspaper, had declined in recent years, according to leftist sources in Hong Kong, as Peking sent increasing numbers of senior party functionaries to oversee the colony's eventual return to

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